

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for producing a scratch-off lottery ticket, the method comprising:
  - causing a plurality of symbols to be printed in a play area of a lottery ticket,
    - each of the symbols being printed adjacent to at least one other symbol,
    - wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the lottery ticket any one of the plurality of play symbols printed in the play area of the lottery ticket is selectable as an initial player selection,
    - wherein at least one set of play symbols forms a potentially continuous path that spans the play area, and further
    - wherein at least one of the potentially continuous paths is associated with a prize; and
  - causing a plurality of links to be printed within the play area,
    - each link being printed between at least two symbols,
    - wherein at least one set of links is printed between the symbols that form the potentially continuous path, and
    - wherein at least two adjacent symbols do not have a link printed between them.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - causing at least one void symbol to be printed as part of at least one of the at least one potentially continuous paths formed by the at least one set of symbols, thereby causing the at least one potentially continuous path that includes the void symbol to be a non-continuous path and thereby causing the other potentially continuous paths to be continuous paths.

3. (Original)      The method of claim 2, further comprising:

causing each of the plurality of symbols, including the at least one void symbol, to be covered with a latex covering; and

causing each of the links to remain uncovered, thereby rendering the at least one non-continuous path to be undifferentiable from the potentially continuous paths until the latex covering is removed from the symbols forming a potentially continuous path.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented)      The method of claim 1, wherein the at least

one of the potentially continuous paths that is associated with a prize is a continuous path that includes less than a predetermined number of symbols.

6. (Previously Presented)      The method of claim 1, wherein a first prize is associated with a first potentially continuous path that includes a first number of symbols and a second prize is associated with a second potentially continuous path that includes a second number of symbols.

7. (Original)      The method of claim 6, wherein the first prize is more valuable than the second prize and wherein the first number is less than the second number.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer readable medium encoded with instructions for directing a processor to:

~~perform the method of claim 1.~~

cause a plurality of symbols to be printed in a play area of a lottery ticket,

each of the symbols being printed adjacent to at least one other symbol,

wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the lottery ticket any one of the plurality of play symbols printed in the play area of the lottery ticket is selectable as an initial player selection,

wherein at least one set of play symbols forms a potentially continuous path that spans the play area, and further

wherein at least one of the potentially continuous paths is associated with a prize; and

cause a plurality of links to be printed within the play area,

each link being printed between at least two symbols,

wherein at least one set of links is printed between the symbols that form the potentially continuous path, and

wherein at least two adjacent symbols do not have a link printed between them.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED)      An apparatus for creating a scratch-off lottery ticket, comprising:

a processor, and

a storage device that stores a program for directing the processor;

the processor being operative with the program to:

cause a plurality of symbols to be printed in a play area of a lottery ticket,

each of the symbols being printed adjacent to at least one other symbol,

wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the lottery ticket any one of the plurality of play symbols printed in the play area of the lottery ticket is selectable as an initial player selection,

wherein at least one set of play symbols forms a potentially continuous path that spans the play area, and further

wherein at least one of the potentially continuous paths is associated with a prize; and

cause a plurality of links to be printed within the play area,

each link being printed between at least two symbols,

wherein at least one set of links is printed between the symbols that form the potentially continuous path, and

wherein at least two adjacent symbols do not have a link printed between them.

10. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for creating a scratch-off lottery ticket, the method comprising:

printing, on a scratch-off lottery ticket, a plurality of nodes in a pattern spanning a play area of the ticket;

printing a plurality of links between the nodes in the play area of the ticket, such that the plurality of nodes and the plurality of links together form a plurality of paths between a first section of the play area and a second section of the play area,

wherein at least two nodes that are adjacent to one another do not have a link printed between them, and

further wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the ticket any one of the plurality of nodes printed in a pattern spanning the play area of the ticket is selectable as an initial player selection; and

causing an indication of prizes to be printed on the ticket, wherein a first prize is associated with a first a first path formed by the nodes and a second prize is associated with a second path formed by the nodes.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

printing at least one symbol within each node

wherein at least one of the symbols is a symbol that indicates a discontinuity in at least one of the paths.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein printing at least one symbol within each node comprises:

printing at least one bar code within each node.

13. (Original)      The method of claim 10, further comprising:  
covering each of the nodes with a scratch-off material, such that the plurality  
of links remain uncovered.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented)      The method of claim 10, wherein causing  
comprises:

causing an indication of at least two prizes to be printed on the ticket,  
wherein a prize of a first value is associated with a first path formed by the nodes  
and a second prize of a second value is associated with a second path formed by  
the nodes, the first value being greater than the second value.

16. (Original)      The method of claim 15, wherein  
each node includes within it at least one symbol, and  
the first path corresponds to a first efficiency of play and the second path  
corresponds to a second efficiency of play,  
efficiency of play being determined by dividing a number of a  
predetermined symbol included in the path by a total number of symbols included  
in the path.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer readable medium encoded with instructions for directing a processor to:

~~perform the method of claim 10.~~

print, on a scratch-off lottery ticket, a plurality of nodes in a pattern spanning a play area of the ticket;

print a plurality of links between the nodes in the play area of the ticket, such that the plurality of nodes and the plurality of links together form a plurality of paths between a first section of the play area and a second section of the play area,

wherein at least two nodes that are adjacent to one another do not have a link printed between them, and

further wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the ticket any one of the plurality of nodes printed in a pattern spanning the play area of the ticket is selectable as an initial player selection; and

cause an indication of prizes to be printed on the ticket, wherein a first prize is associated with a first first path formed by the nodes and a second prize is associated with a second path formed by the nodes.

18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An apparatus for creating a scratch-off lottery ticket, comprising:

a processor, and

a storage device that stores a program for directing the processor;

the processor being operative with the program to:

~~perform the method of claim 10.~~

print, on a scratch-off lottery ticket, a plurality of nodes in a pattern spanning a play area of the ticket;

print a plurality of links between the nodes in the play area of the ticket, such that the plurality of nodes and the plurality of links together form a plurality of paths between a first section of the play area and a second section of the play area,

wherein at least two nodes that are adjacent to one another do not have a link printed between them, and

further wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the ticket any one of the plurality of nodes printed in a pattern spanning the play area of the ticket is selectable as an initial player selection; and

cause an indication of prizes to be printed on the ticket, wherein a first prize is associated with a first a first path formed by the nodes and a second prize is associated with a second path formed by the nodes.



19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for facilitating play of a simulated scratch-off lottery ticket on an electronic device, comprising:

generating a pattern of nodes in a play area of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket,

the pattern of nodes forming a plurality of available paths from the first section of the play area to a second section of the play area,

at least one of the nodes having including at least one symbol within a perimeter of the node

wherein at least two nodes in the pattern that are adjacent to one another do not together form a portion of an available path, and

further wherein any one of the nodes is selectable at the start of a game of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket;

causing the at least one symbol within a perimeter of a node to be concealed from view until a signal indicating a selection of the node by a player is determined;

receiving an indication that a player has completed a game comprising the generated pattern of nodes; and

determining whether the player is eligible for a prize based on a result of the game; and

outputting an indication of whether the player is eligible for a prize.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the pattern of nodes further comprises links between the nodes, each link indicating a connection of one node to another node in one of the available paths and wherein at least two nodes that are adjacent to one another in the pattern are not connected by a link.

21. (Original)      The method of claim 20, making the generated pattern available for download to an electronic device.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented)      The method of claim 19, wherein determining whether the player is eligible for a prize comprises:  
determining whether the player has selected a set of nodes in the pattern that form a path from the first section of the play area to the second section of the play area, thereby determining whether the player has revealed a path that potentially qualifies for a prize;

if the player has selected a path that potentially qualifies for a prize,  
determining whether the path includes less than a predetermined number of nodes;  
and

causing a prize to be provided to the player if the path includes less than the predetermined number of nodes.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, further comprising:  
determining an efficiency of play of the player by

determining a number of a predetermined symbol included in the path  
selected by the player,

determining a number of nodes included in the path, and

dividing the number of the predetermined symbol by the number of  
nodes.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

causing a first prize to be provided to the player if the efficiency of play is a  
first efficiency and causing a second prize to be provided to the player if the  
efficiency of play is a second efficiency, wherein the first efficiency is greater than  
the second efficiency.

26. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for facilitating play of a simulated scratch-off lottery ticket on an electronic device, comprising:

- reading data that defines a pattern of nodes spanning a play area of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket, the pattern defining a plurality of paths between a first section of the play area and a second section of the play area,
  - wherein each path of the plurality of paths is defined by links between adjacent nodes,
  - wherein at least two of the nodes that are adjacent to one another do not include a link between them,
  - wherein any one of the nodes is selectable at the start of a game of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket, and
  - wherein at least one of the nodes is associated with at least one symbol, the at least one symbol not being made visible from a predetermined viewing perspective until a signal indicating selection of the node associated with the symbol is received;
- outputting the data on a display,
  - wherein the links defining the paths are visible from the predetermined viewing perspective from the time the data is initially output;
- determining that an attempt to win a prize associated with the data has ended; ~~and~~
- determining whether the attempt has been successful; and
- outputting an indication of whether the attempt has been successful.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising:

- receiving a signal indicating a selection of a node; and
- causing the at least one symbol associated with the node to be made visible from the predetermined viewing perspective.

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein determining whether the attempt has been successful comprises:

determining whether a set of nodes forming a path from the first section of the play area to the second section of the play area has been selected.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein determining whether the attempt has been successful further comprises:

determining whether the set of nodes forming a path comprises less than a predetermined number of nodes.

31. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein determining whether the attempt has been successful further comprises:

determining whether the set of nodes forming the path includes at least a predetermined number of a predetermined symbol.

32. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer readable medium encoded with instructions for directing a processor to:

~~perform the method of claim 26.~~

read data that defines a pattern of nodes spanning a play area of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket, the pattern defining a plurality of paths between a first section of the play area and a second section of the play area,

wherein each path of the plurality of paths is defined by links between adjacent nodes,

wherein at least two of the nodes that are adjacent to one another do not include a link between them,

wherein any one of the nodes is selectable at the start of a game of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket, and

wherein at least one of the nodes is associated with at least one symbol, the at least one symbol not being made visible from a predetermined viewing perspective until a signal indicating selection of the node associated with the symbol is received;  
output the data on a display,

wherein the links defining the paths are visible from the predetermined viewing perspective from the time the data is initially output;  
determine that an attempt to win a prize associated with the data has ended;  
determine whether the attempt has been successful; and  
output an indication of whether the attempt has been successful.

33. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An apparatus for creating a scratch-off lottery ticket, comprising:

a processor, and

a storage device that stores a program for directing the processor;

the processor being operative with the program to:

~~perform the method of claim 26.~~

read data that defines a pattern of nodes spanning a play area of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket, the pattern defining a plurality of paths between a first section of the play area and a second section of the play area,

wherein each path of the plurality of paths is defined by links between adjacent nodes,

wherein at least two of the nodes that are adjacent to one another do not include a link between them,

wherein any one of the nodes is selectable at the start of a game of the simulated scratch-off lottery ticket, and

wherein at least one of the nodes is associated with at least one symbol, the at least one symbol not being made visible from a predetermined viewing perspective until a signal indicating selection of the node associated with the symbol is received;  
output the data on a display,

wherein the links defining the paths are visible from the predetermined viewing perspective from the time the data is initially output;  
determine that an attempt to win a prize associated with the data has ended;  
determine whether the attempt has been successful; and  
output an indication of whether the attempt has been successful.

34. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for producing a scratch-off lottery ticket, the method comprising:

establishing a rule of a game in which any one of a plurality of printed play symbols spanning a play area of a lottery ticket is selectable as an initial player selection in the game;

causing a plurality of symbols to be printed in a play area of a lottery ticket,

each of the symbols being printed adjacent to at least one other symbol,

wherein at least one set of play symbols forms a potentially continuous path that spans the play area, and further

wherein at least one of the potentially continuous paths is associated with a prize; and

causing a plurality of links to be printed within the play area,

each link being printed between at least two symbols,

wherein at least one set of links is printed between the symbols that form the potentially continuous path, and

wherein at least two adjacent symbols do not have a link printed between them.



35. (NEW) A method for providing a scratch-off lottery game, the method comprising:

- displaying a plurality of game elements in a play area of a lottery game,
  - each of the game elements being displayed adjacent to at least one other game element,

- wherein each game element includes at least one indication of a link to an adjacent game element,

- wherein each game element includes an indication of a respective value associated with the game element, and

- wherein in accordance with a game rule associated with the lottery game any one of the plurality of game elements printed in the play area of the lottery game is selectable as an initial player selection; and

- displaying a total game element including an indication of a predetermined total value,

- wherein at least one set of two or more game elements forms a first potentially continuous path and a second potentially continuous path, such that the sum of the respective values of the two or more game elements of the first potentially continuous path is greater than the predetermined total value and the first potentially continuous path is associated with a prize, and

- wherein the second potentially continuous path is not associated with a prize.

36. (NEW) The method of claim 35, wherein the sum of the respective values of the two or more game elements of the first potentially continuous path is greater than the predetermined total value and is not greater than a predetermined maximum value.

37. (NEW) The method of claim 36, in which the predetermined maximum value is twenty-one.

38. (NEW) The method of claim 35, wherein the sum of the respective values of the two or more game elements of the second potentially continuous path is greater than a predetermined maximum value.

39. (NEW) The method of claim 38, in which the predetermined maximum value is twenty-one.

40. (NEW) The method of claim 35, wherein the sum of the respective values of the two or more game elements of the second potentially continuous path is not greater than the predetermined total value.

41. (NEW) The method of claim 35, wherein the at least one set of two or more game elements that forms a potentially continuous path includes a number of game elements not greater than a predetermined maximum number.

42. (NEW) The method of claim 41, in which the predetermined maximum number is five.

43. (NEW) The method of claim 35, further comprising:  
obscuring all of the game elements;  
allowing a player to reveal first any of the game elements;  
receiving a first selection by a player of a first game element that indicates a link to a second game element;  
revealing the first game element to the player;  
receiving a second selection by a player of the second game element that indicates a link to a third game element;  
revealing the second game element to the player;  
determining, based on the first game element, the second game element, and the predetermined total value, whether the player has won a prize; and  
indicating to the player whether the player has won a prize.